2: Pulop--1 E-5 (1954) 1956 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

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Aspects of Tucano Culture
Mythology -- Part I

By Marcos Pulop

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Preliminary Note

[101]

The material presented here was collected between June 11 and September 9, 1954, when field work was done in the village /Sp. caserío/ of Guadalajara, located on the Paca River, a tributary of the Papurí River, in the Comisaría Especial del Vaupés. Performing the functions of informant and interpreter were Marcos Sierra and Manuel Sierra respectively, blood brothers and residents of the village of Guadalajara.

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121 773

The mythology that appears in this article is a very small portion of the total Tukano /Tucano/ mythology. The author has considered it advisable not to analyze individually the myths published here, but to wait until all the Tukano mythology has been collected and published.

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*539 /339/ I. Boraró and Boraró Numió

A man and a woman stayed in Diaojpekowí, and they were brother and sister. These two beings do not have children, but will never die. When they want to leave Diaojpekowí, they turn themselves into spirits. The man is named Boraró, and the woman is named Boraró Numió. Boraró and Boraró Numió kill people by opening a hole in their heads and sucking out the entire body through this hole. They leave only the skin of the victim, which they throw on a tree /Sp. palo/. To kill her victim, Boraró Numió lies down face up and begins to urinate at a distance of about 150 meters from her victim. Boraró, to kill his victim, urinates standing at a distance of about 150 meters from his victim. And when Boraró and Boraró Numió urinate, everyone that is within those 150 meters falls dead instantly.

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Aspects of Tukano /Tucano/ Culture: Cosmogony

by Marcos Fulop

121 [122] /Page 98 is blank./

/99/ Commissioned by the Dirección of the Instituto Colombiano de Antropología, we are initiating ethnographic studies among the natives of the Comisaría Especial del Vaupes. We have considered it convenient to begin the anthropological study of the cultures of this region with the Tukano /Tucano/ group.

114 [101] The material that is published below was gathered during our stay in the settlement of Guadalajara, on the Paca River, from June 13 to July 9, 1953. Our informant was Marcos Sierra, 124 and Manuel Sierra, the brother of the preceding, served as interpreter. Owing to the short time of the investigation and to having consulted only one informant, we are not able to guarantee the exactitude of the version of the Tukano cosmogony given by Marcos Sierra. This cosmogony is repeated in the manner of a cult to the ancestors during the feasts of Dabukurí and Yuruparí.

105 [171] The Tukano culture is actually representative of the cultures of the tropical forests of South America. Their regimen of life is sedentary; they practice horticulture, and bitter yuca (1)

1. Manihot utilissima.

constitutes the basis of their alimentation, which is supplemented with products obtained by means of hunting and fishing; they are efficient in the construction and handling of river vessels; they use the hammock for a bed; they possess the art of ceramics and do not know metalurgy.

131 The Tukano Indians are found located on the lower Vaupés /Uaupés/ River, from the falls of Ipanoré to the outlet of the Vaupés into the Río Negro; on the Tiquié and Papurí /Papury/ rivers; and on small streams that empty into these three rivers.

/7 cont./

• 121 dazzling riches of enchanted castles, but forbidden for us, and of which we can contemplate, from the outside, only blackened walls, in the almost inexpressive fragments of their legends.

These notes are only a path in the wilderness. Other students will come to rebuild the road; they will straighten out detours, join with viaducts points previously without connection, solidify with the firmness of their observations those passages that now face the threat of mires, and the final result will be the wide and straight avenue, open and safe, planted with trees and made beautiful by the truth, along which multitudes will pass in the future.

They aspire to much more, however. They wish to be a cry of gratitude and patriotism. Gratitude to those dedicated /8/ Missionaries (and all of them, without distinction as to nationality or institutions, from Anchieta up to the most modest Lay Brother or Nun) who, inspired by the purest love of God, renounce the affection of the family, the comfort of civilization, and many times the charm of their homelands as well, making the life of the Indian theirs, in order to make him a son of Brazil and of Our Lord Jesus Christ, expecting only God's reward, but not infrequently receiving beforehand the ingratitude of the forest dwellers and the slander of malevolent and irresponsible people.

It is a cry of unrestrained patriotism, calling the attention of Brazil, -- the Government, the wealthy, the men of letters, -- to those races who take shelter under the majestic crown of the Amazon forest. It urges the interest of all Brazilians to awaken in order to provide for an investigation of aids that will facilitate the rapid integration of those many thousands of countrymen into Brazilian and Christian civilization. Therefore, to be concerned about the incorporation of the natives into Brazilian civilization is not only a humanitarian and religious work, but also of the most legitimate patriotism. Thus it urges that the support of the Government be intensified for those who have dedicated their lives and their energies to the well-being of the forest dweller of the Uaupés.

Padre Alcionilio Brüzzi Alves da Silva, S. D. B.

/6 cont./

115 It should not seem exaggerated to speak of an existence
123 of intimate contact with the natives. Because not only our /7/ personal observations are recorded here. We tried to know and to listen to all the Salesian Missionaries who work along the rivers Negro, Uaupés, Tiquié, Papuri, Içana, and Caburi; as well as the Montfort Missionaries who attended to the natives of the region bordering Colombia, since some of the tribes in the study have members living in the zone that today is part of Colombian territory. And, through the mercy of God, we had the happy opportunity to talk with Missionaries who have been living with the children of the forests and for them since 1916.

Therefore, this work, in the strict sense, is a contribution by the Salesian Missionaries to ethnographic studies that, if they are of interest in a general way to the students of the whole world, also speak to us, Brazilians, of political and patriotic interests.

• 121 These pages are a documentary on how the life of the forest people of the Uaupés or Caiarí runs its course in the middle of the twentieth century. By dint of an unyieldingly traditionalist mentality which characterizes these human groups, we may also think that they are, on general lines, a description of how they have lived for centuries, or perhaps even of how these tribes have lived since they acclimated themselves in their present habitat. Scarce data from the first explorers and information from the old natives justify this opinion.

Even though we enjoyed privileged conditions which other ethnologists have not had, or at least will not be able to have, the intractable depths of the native psyche takes from us the illusion of having unveiled their soul. We are also convinced that we do not yet know customs and practices of interest from the ethnological point of view, and the true meaning of many others escapes us. The primitive fantasy, all the more active the freer it is from the curb of reason and the inhibiting control of positive experience in that mysterious and suggestive environment of the millenary forest, will have built a legendary world with fascinating beauties for their souls, as if they were the

/14 cont./

361 the intelligence of the forest dweller the advantage of the safety of his property, which thus more easily escapes being seen and covetousness. The natural consequence is that the density of the population in each group is independent of the fertility of the adjacent lands.

/15/ Chapter II

The Tribes of the Uaupés in the Historical Period

1 -- Data on the History of the Rio Negro and the Uaupés River

174 The important problem of the origin of the forest dwellers of Brazil, as of America, still awaits solution. Since anthropo-ethnological science does not recognize them as autochthons, where did they come from? From only one or from various origins? In what era? By which path? With what means? In one or several successive migrations? Under what direction? How did they spread?

• [121] The present work does not aim at answering these or other connected questions. Nevertheless a rapid survey of this cultural group of the Uaupés within the historical period for it, that is, since the discovery of Brazil, is advisable.

175 The voyage of discovery of the "Rio das Amazonas," as it became known at the time, was made by Francisco Orellana in 1541, the friar of the Order of Saint Dominic, Gaspar de Carvajal, serving as chronicler. From his account there appears with respect to the Rio Negro only that on Saturday, the eve of the Feast of the Holy Trinity, June 3, 1542, "We saw the mouth of another large river, on the left bank, which entered the one that we were navigating and of water black as ink and therefore we gave it the name of Rio Negro" ("Descobrimentos do rio das Amazonas /Discoveries of the Amazon River/," 50).

/68 cont./

165 The natives who are over 70 years of age are rare; at 50 years of age the Indian is already old (28),

28. The appearance makes one commonly use the word old in order to specify the individual better. Thus one frequently hears: "old Felipe of such-and-such a place," "old Cândido," etc.

and he usually dies before 60.

/69/

Chapter IV

Distinction and Classification

1. Distinction

• 121 *101 These studies cover, we repeat, the tribes of Brazil and Colombia who populate the basin of the Uaupés. Under such denomination we mean the Uaupés River, from where it enters Brazil, soon after the afflux of the river Querarí, up to its mouth in the Rio Negro, with its two tributaries, the Papurí and the Tiquié, and numerous small tributaries. Our field research covers not only all the human groupings located on the banks of the three rivers above, but also many other groups from the headwaters of those rivers and in the interior of the forest. For this reason it seems to us that we can consider in a general way the large area of the "basin of the Uaupés." All the more since some of the groups that are found farther in the interior on the igarapés belong to the riverine tribes, or at least they have had relations with them for a long time, and in this way there has been cultural assimilation.

/78 cont./

532 184 On the other hand, among the tribes of the Uaupés, the masks are manufactured and worn by the Kubêwana and Wanana, and, [illegible]r, also by the Taryana. We likewise find masks among the Íde-masÍ of the stream Comé-ia (tributary of the left bank of the river Pirá-paraná).

2. Classification

121 The attempt to classify the tribes of Brazil in general, as well as those of the Amazon or of the Rio Negro in particular, is still open for discussion.

A classification, let us say, culturological, of the tribes of the Uaupés is impossible today. The relations among the various tribes, already dating back centuries, brought about a more or less perfect interculturation among them. We can, then, affirm that the nations of the Uaupés constitute at present a single cultural group, the origin of whose cultural elements is difficult to retrace at the present time. The peculiarities of each tribe are few and insignificant, as we have just seen, and do not, by themselves, permit a classification.

A classification fundamentally anthropological, be it serological, be it somatic, is likewise impossible. The blood 143 examination done a few years ago by Prof. Emílio Biocca of the University of Rome on 237 individuals of the Tukano, Taryana, and Maku tribes showed that all of them belonged to type O, and the relation between the genes m and n was constant. The regimen of absolute tribal exogamy, which has been practiced for centuries among them, necessarily brings about bio-anthropological assimilation.

197 Though it seems to us that at present the glottologic classification would be still easier and more persuasive, nevertheless in this plurisecular melting-pot some idioms were profoundly altered and some human groups have already adopted

/79 cont./

121 Among the tribes of the region being studied, we noted
171 the presence of small human groups of sylvicolists par
433 excellence, that is hunters, more or less nomadic; they are
241 the Maku. Whereas the other tribes are fluminicolists, that is, established on the banks of the important watercourses and given to fishing and agriculture. Although some Maku groups have assimilated many of the customs of the other tribes, we do not include them in these studies. We have already pointed out (I, Note 1) that the Maku are probably the most ancient inhabitants of the region.

The tribes that we studied are classified, then, in two large linguistic families:

101 1st. Tukano Family, covering the tribes: 1. Daxseá
121 or Tukano; 2. Bará or Barasana; 3. Bã:re-masã or Temyú-tapuya (food people); 4. Doxká-foará or Tuyuka (clay people); 5. Edúrya or Erúlya; 6. Emõã-masã or Warĺwa-tapuya (guariba people); 7. Hanẽra or Panẽnoá; 8. Ĺde-masã, Aõ-nĩra, Makuná or Yĺ-tapuya /80/ (water people); 9. Ihwana or Yona; 10. Koneá or Arapásu (woodpecker people); 11. Kótirya or Wanana; 12. Mõxtã or Karapanã-tapuya (daddy-longlegs people); 13. Neenõã or Miriti-tapuya (buriti people); 14. Oá-mahã or Mikura-tapuya (gambá people); 15. Pamĩwa or Kubewana; 16. Páboa-maxsã or Tatu-tapuya (tatu people); 17. Roéra-masã or Taraĺra-tapuya (taraĺra people); 18. Surirá or Suryana; 19. Tsẽna; 20. Yebá-masã; 21. Wahyara, Waĺana or Yuriti-tapuya (dove people); 22. Waĺ-khãna or Pirá-tapuya (fish people); 23. Winá or Desana.

2nd. Arwake Family, including the tribes: 1. Kumãdene or Ipeka-tapuya (water-duck people); 2. Talyáseri or Taryana. We speak only of these two, because the other tribes of this numerous family do not inhabit the Uaupés basin, and, indeed, that of the rivers Içana, Xié, and Negro.

4: Silva--249 M-4,5 (1947-1958) 1962 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

Chapter VI

Material Culture

121 *[192]

1. Dwelling, wi'ɾ.

Under the name of material culture (Sachkultur of the German authors), we mean the conjunction of objects that the forest dweller produces for the necessities of life. They are, properly speaking, the material objects in which they manifest their cultural level.

361 178

The tribes that we have studied are not nomads. They have been established in the actual phase in which we found them for several generations or centuries (as far as the record completed by some pieces of information from the first travelers extends) in the same place, from where they move only because of epidemics or fights. The dissident group then goes to build a new house or to start another povoado, ordinarily not very far from the first one, perhaps barely a few kilometers away.

342 [178]

Even today malocas that are quite old, half a century perhaps, are admired. Particular circumstances (fire, storm, etc.) might likewise force the construction of a new maloca. The Indian always prefers to make a new house instead of repairing the old one, if it is greatly damaged. Although for the new construction he will often make use of the beams and, more commonly, the straw of the covering, especially if it is still good and he would have to go very far to find new straw. Thus, in dealing with sedentary tribes, it is natural that we find good dwellings. Since it is a zone with frequent and torrential rains, the simple construction of clay is not suitable.

*[192]

The system of covering, peókaro, is always that of two slopes and with great inclination, so that the drip of the roof will remain only a meter or a little more above the ground.

*[192]

The palm for the covering will vary according to the resources of the region; they generally use the caraná (maurítia flexuósa, Wall.), pɯ'sɛ̃, because, besides protecting well from the rains, it lasts for many years. They usually complete the covering starting from the drip.

/253 cont./

121 We shall indicate here the primitive manifestations of their culture (Persönlichkeitkultur), meaning by this expression what these forest dwellers exhibit from their own culture and not received from the white, and which is easily discovered from living with them.

212 /254/ 1. Writing.

A question that immediately arises is whether these tribes know how to write. One can answer that at present they do not [797] know or use any kind of writing (2).

2. With the exception, naturally, of those who have passed through the Mission schools. One notices this peculiarity: they learn how to write the Portuguese language with some facility, but they write Tukano with difficulty. Actually the letters of the Latin alphabet, which we use and such as we pronounce in Portuguese, do not reproduce all the sounds of the Tukano language.

172 It is a question open to discussion as to whether those signs
532 that are found on many stones of the Rio Negro and tributaries, that is, the petroglyphs or itacoatiaras (ãxta ohoritirí-pa in Tukano), are a writing of spoken language, or at least ciphered language (of which idiom? of which tribe? in which era?); or are only designs, perhaps stylized (sportive signs /Port. sinais lúdicos/) (3).

3. About the itacoatiaras, their antiquity and their interpretation, cf. the notable work by Bernardo da Silva Ramos, Inscrições e tradições da América pré-histórica /Inscriptions and traditions of Prehistoric America/. Koch Grünberg, going up the river Curicuriari (tributary of the right bank of the Rio Negro), on February 14, 1904, found on a stone designs with the figures

/321/

177 792 between the Papurí and the Tiquié. Some old people who took some of the remedies of the "Santo" /saint/ are still living (in 1949). These pilgrimages and cures ended with the death of Lino.

c) Concept of Religion.

• 121 Religion, in a more rigorous sense, is the theoretical and practical acknowledgement of a Supreme Being, whom we call God, as Sovereign Lord of the whole universe, which is a creation of his.

We take it here in a less rigorous and broader meaning, as belief in beings superior to human beings and different from them, with whom it is possible and expedient to be in communication, and the belief in a future extraterrestrial life different from the one that is led on earth (5).

5. M. Morris Jastrow (The Study of Religion -- New York, 1921 /1901/) reduces to three the constituent elements of Religion: 1st. recognition of one or several powers that do not depend on us; 2nd. feeling of man's dependence in relation to this power or powers; 3rd. possibility of dealing and communicating with these powers. Such a concept is inexact and incomplete. Inexact, since it leads one to confuse Religion with Magic. If this power or potency is something impersonal, like the cosmic force, a relationship and intercourse with it are not possible, and although the human being recognizes it as superior to himself, he does not worship it, he fears it and tries to conquer it and dominate it with particular practices that are called magical. We have, then, Magic.

4: Silva--475 M-4,5 (1947-1958) 1962 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

/321 cont./

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/Footnote 5 cont./ If he conceives it as personal potency, or better "spiritual Being," whom he respects and propitiates by the cult, we then have a religious cult and a Religion. Now it seems to us that we have found indications, even though vague, of a cult and a Religion in the tribes of the Uaupés.

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Taken in the first meaning, it is affirmed that the Indians of the Uaupés do not have religion, since neither temples in which to worship God (6)

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6. This absence has been noted since the time of the discoveries. It is true that Frei Gaspar de Carvajal ("Descobrimentos /Discoveries/," p. 51), describing the voyage of discovery of Francisco Orrelana /sic/ in 1540, speaks to us of the cult of the sun, with temple and altar: "On this day (Monday after the Feast of the Holy Trinity, June 5, 1540) we moored at an aldeia of medium size, where the people were waiting for us. There was a very large plaza there, and in the middle of the plaza a large plank in a square of ten feet, painted and sculptured in relief, representing a walled city, with its enclosure and a door. On this door there were two very high towers with their windows, the towers with the doors facing each other, each door with two columns. This entire work was supported on top of two very ferocious lions, which were looking back, as though wary of each other, and supported it on the forelegs and on the claws. In the middle of this plaza there was a hole where they put down, as offerings to the sun, the chicha, which is the

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[CONTINUED ON PAGE 477]

/322 cont./

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/footnote 7 cont./ Rio Negro. The use of these terms by the Indians of the Uaupés themselves, when they describe their traditions to us, is of value as proof of the foreign influence in their myths and rites.

(in Tukano Wɨ̃x-tĩ), who is celebrated or understood to be placated with the Dabacurís (in Tukano Poosé), in order for him not to harm them, malicious spirit that he is. As for God (in Tukano Wá:kõ or O'ɨ̃-kȭ) he is a great absent one, who does not concern himself about human beings and is without any influence on their life. There is, then, no need to be interested in Wá:kõ or to think of him in order to worship him.

The study of these tribes convinces us that they are in a phase of great regression or involution, with traces of totemism, its little religious feeling and great preponderance of magic being shown to us by them.

• 121

Religion in a subjective sense is, according to W. Schmidt, Manuale di Stória comparata delle Religioni /Handbook of the Comparative History of Religions/, p. 2), "the idea and feeling of dependence on a supraterrestrial personal Power, with whom it is /323/ intended to enter into relations"; and, objectively, it is "the conjunction of exterior acts in which religion is expressed and by which it is manifested." We shall consider it especially in this sense.

Let us examine separately for better apprehension of the indications of this weak religious feeling and its exact comprehension: 1st. its doctrinal points; 2nd. its cult practices; 3rd. its rules of moral, religious, and social behavior.

d) Doctrinal points.

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1) Concept of a Supreme Being.

a) The totality of the Indians of these tribes living in the povoados on the bank of the Brazilian rivers Uaupés, Tiquié, and Papurí distinguish at the present time, as they did a century ago,

/374 cont./

764 3) Funeral libation and feast. Soon after the burial (perhaps the following night), according to the circumstances and the length of time needed for the preparations, a feast takes place in the maloca. Obligatorily consisting, as always, of abundant [535] libations of caxirí and the traditional dances, over the tomb of their companion.

It has not been reported, however, that at this funeral caxirí there might be particular mention of the late one. Perhaps one [628] of the guests will be the one to whose malefice the death is attributed. They invite him in order, in the alcoholic exaltation, to avenge the death of the "brother."

765 It is to be noted that there is no repugnance in speaking of the "dead," mihĩ (the late one).

*[192] There is therefore no evidence either of any external sign of mourning that would be observed for some time, or of traces of commemoration of the dead, as we might expect from so much union in life and from some circumstances of the burial, which we have already pointed out. Unless this occurs in the dances and songs of the poosé. Our native informants, however, did not know or did not want to clarify this for us.

[775] In contradiction with this closeness or bond with the dead, there is the belief that the dead become transformed into wãx-tĩ (disembodied spirit) and can frighten them or even harm them, as was said previously (cf. VII -- 4 e (2 c -- What to think of wãx-tĩ?)).

[115] Formerly among the Taryana, stated Felisberto from Urubu-
[535] cuara, six days after the death of a tuxáua, or of some kõmũ, the caxirí (funeral feast) with the "dance of the masks" or the "great weeping" was held.

CANNIBALISM

• 121 The practice of eating human flesh is called cannibalism or anthropophagy.

266 In America it is a custom verified among the Karaíba, hence the tendency to include in this group all the cannibal tribes.

/374 cont./

• 121 266 It is probable that such a practice, in origin, is due to the lack of food. Nevertheless, later, because of the whole orientation of the mentality of primitive man, it came to take on a magical character. One must, then, distinguish economic cannibalism and ritual cannibalism.

/375/ 1. Economic cannibalism.

In economic cannibalism the flesh of enemies, fresh or preserved by various processes that they know, is usually consumed; this is exoanthropophagy. Hence expeditions of war to provide human flesh.

266 721 This is what Wallace tells us (o. c. 638) about the Kubewana: --"On the Uaupés only the Cubeus /Cubeo/ are truly cannibals. They eat those of the other tribes whom they kill in battle. In order to obtain human flesh still fresh, they even make war for this single purpose. When the meat exceeds what they can eat at one time, they dry it and smoke it on the fire, and thus it can be stored for a long time. They burn the heads of the dead ones and drink their ashes with caxirí in the same way that has already been described above."

[727] [567] As for the Kubewana or other tribes of the Uaupés, this information obtained by Wallace seems false to us. Perhaps in turn based on Wallace is Bento de Figueiredo Tenreiro Aranha, Director of the "Archivo do Amazonas" (1907, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 80), in his article entitled "As explorações e os exploradores do Uaupés /The explorations and the explorers of the Uaupés/," where he also affirms: -- "When they take a prisoner in war, if it is a man, they massacre, if it is a woman or a young man, they sell, when they find a buyer, otherwise they kill and eat, dividing the pieces among everyone in the tribe."

266 648 726 The encounters and reprisals that took place about twenty years ago between the Colombian seringueiros /rubber workers/ and the natives of the banks of the Cananari, tributary of the Pirá-paraná, are still remembered (information by the Colombian Napoleão Estrada, in November of 1953, and by others). Still

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53 /377 cont./

Koch concludes that at this cannibalistic feast there were dances of masks on which he could verify the following details: the participants wore a band of yellow bark as a stole on the neck, and on the left arm a banner of bark, in the right hand a rhythm tube (VII -- 3, c (3 c)) of imbauba, with paintings representing fish. They advance and back up and, marking time with the right foot, carry on a monotonous song with innumerable repetitions.

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765 We could seek the origin of this peculiar custom, which is also found among other tropical tribes of South America, teaches Koch, in the belief that the bones that remain after death are the /378/ last place in which the spirits reside. And with the ingestion of the ashes the individuals incorporate in themselves the substance and the spirit of the ancestors.

5. Morality.

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831 When we deal with this subject, the necessity of some warnings beforehand is imposed:

1st. -- We limit the breadth of the term morality to the common and vulgar meaning, as if it were a synonym of moderation of carnal concupiscence, or further as a synonym of customs in force in sexual relations.

2nd. -- We present, naturally, those points in discrepancy with the norms of Christian morals and which, for this very reason, impress one more.

797
831 3rd. -- Many of the customs that we were able to collect are not in force, obviously, in those groups or among those individuals who are under the influence of the Catholic Missions. But the Missionaries themselves are the first to confess that the modifications of the ancestral customs that they achieve in the field of morality are the fruit of many exhortations, vigilance, and the frequency of the sacraments and religious practices.

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197. Concerning the components of these linguistic families and their location, as well as their comparative vocabularies, see our work Idiomas Indígenas da Amazônia.

/471/ d) Kurá or Gens.

614 We have indicated in a previous chapter (IV - 2-a(2)) the divisions of the tribes, divisions that are called Kurá in the Tukano language. According to native ideas, these divisions date back to the time of the origin of the tribe, by the will of Wãx-tĩ himself. We shall give in another place (cf. the work by the author, "Lendas do Uaupés /Legends of the Uaupés/") the legend of the origins according to the account of the old Komũ Gabriel Costa of Parí-cachoeira.

[115]

614 So many questions awaiting solution arise: When did these subdivisions take place? For what reason? What was their basis or foundation? We have verified for today a phenomenon of dispersion of a nation in small groups; would there have been a fusion in the past, or can we foresee a future one? The two first questions are of historic nature, and we lack the data to answer them. We might be able to add elucidative elements to the last two.

121

1) From the time that a human group settles in a locale that will provide it with the necessary or even abundant means of subsistence, it will naturally become prolific. It is nomadism, at the same time cause and effect of a deficient diet, that lowers the birth rate: 1st, by the organic depauperation of the parents; 2nd, by forcing a prolonged nursing of the children (up to four or more years); 3rd, favoring certain criminal practices (abortion, infanticide, cannibalism of the children).

The human groups, growing in number, cannot remain in the same maloca. Besides the difficulties of nourishment, which we have already mentioned, the real technical difficulty of enlarging the existing maloca or the building of new and larger ones demands

/471 cont./

614 the division of the original group (107).

• 121

107. It is possible that other reasons might have intervened, such as the misunderstandings that are still verified today.

While the first-born son, with his family, would remain beside the old couple, the other sons of the founder would become, in turn, founders of new malocas, which would grow with the natural fecundity of the native woman. This hypothesis, more in agreement with the nature of things, is confirmed, it seems, by the customs.

614 1st. -- A first one is the denomination of "brother" for all the
601 individuals of the same nation (that is, who are recognized as from such-and-such a tribe and speak the same language), a denomination corresponding, besides, to their feelings (they can not marry each other, mutual aid and understanding, lamentation for a death, and vengeance for the brother who has been a victim of another tribe).

All of them are brothers, but there is a distinction between Mamĩ (bigger brother) and Axkabĩ (smaller brother). Among the brothers-german, that is, /472/ children of the same father, the terms mamĩ and axkabĩ correspond to the ages. Outside of this case, they no longer correspond. For example, one hears an adult characterize a child as mamĩ. It is, therefore, a matter of
614 a hierarchic classification.

554 An I'ra-pé Tukano said that he regarded the Waũ-ro and Oyẽ
[115] as Mamĩ; in relation to the Waú-ro we heard the expression
* [192] "Tukano of the head," Dexseá ná dõxpoá," as equivalent to the
[601] principal branch, as was soon explained to us by Patrícia Vasconcelos. We have here, then, indications of an aristocracy (108).

[175] 108. The existence of this aristocracy was already known in 1755 by Pe. Noronha. Xavier de Sampaio

/485 cont./

888 he will face Wïx-tï, the great Idea, the great Spirit, in which he has always believed, whom he has respected and feared and tried to propitiate, as his ancestors taught him.

764 When they become aware of the quiet and solitary catastrophe, the maloca will be agitated by the clamorous wailing of the nation for the member who has just passed away.

• 121 This, however, does not complete the cycle of native life.
797 All of those tribes of the Caiarí are nowadays in direct or indirect relation with the "Civilização de Cristo" /Civilization of Christ/. The parents, under the impulse of paternal love, dream of making their child a civilized person, child of Brazil and of the Church. This sacred fire is kindled deep inside each youth, and for this reason he enrolls in the Catholic schools. They spend long and happy years there, without dissociating themselves, however, from their nation. And they return to their "brothers" with their minds more enlightened, greater material comfort, a belief in the Creator God of heaven and earth, Lord, Judge and Father, and a hope of a less sad old age, nourished by the hopes of a happy future life without end.

And the elders, to whom such a chance was not presented, will perhaps have assistance in the hospitals that the charity of Jesus Christ has erected in each Missionary center, and the maternal care of a Religious who tries to alleviate the physical pain and to comfort the soul. And, above all, they will have the hope of the assistance of a Missionary who, in the last moments of life, through the infinite efficacy of the Sacraments, will make him a child of God, will enrich his soul with grace and will open for him the doors of eternal blessedness. /Page 486 is blank./

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Introduction

No region of the South American tropical forest can claim greater anthropological interest than any other. The entire area of the two great river basins, the Orinoco and the Amazon, is still an anthropological terra incognita. Of its hundreds of tribes most are known only by name; and where more than the name is known it is not the full life but a scattering of information about assorted customs and a handful of word lists that is most often available. The region is an ethnographic swamp where few features rise clearly and vividly above the surface. Whoever undertakes to survey the data confronts a morass of customs dispersed over the vastness of the Amazon Basin with no easily discernible patterns. A few major studies are landmarks and serve as guides to social systems and to cultural patterns. Yet many of these landmark studies are but the surveys of explorers and museum collectors, indefatigable and observant, but understandably preoccupied with the survey in space more than with the study in depth. More recent studies have greater depth, revealing more fully the structure of social life. But of such studies there are few. So slight is our knowledge of this, one of the great natural areas of primitive man, that both kinds of study, the survey of traits and the intensive study of a society, are eminently justifiable. The survey plots the broad features and their variations; the intensive study provides the patterns of tribal life.

One of the astonishing and saddening oversights of twentieth-century anthropological research has been its still-continuing neglect

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121 of the lowland South American tropical forest and savannah. Before too long we shall recognize this oversight as tragic, because Indian life in the entire area is rapidly disappearing. When it is gone what will anthropology have lost? It will have lost patterns of cultural life, forms of religious life, forms of social structure, and profiles of personality types, not to mention knowledge of countless customs that have no precise counterpart elsewhere in the primitive world. From what we now know, the Amazon Basin, taken as a whole, contains an extraordinarily wide range of variations on every human cultural institution. It represents countless combinations of a common pool of similar cultural traits spread over its area of over 2,500,000 square miles.

The region of the two river basins, really one great Amazon Basin, provides a common lowland setting within which to study human and cultural variability and potentiality. Here we find a common economic adaptation of root horticulture with its strong emphasis upon bitter manioc (*Manihot utilissima*) as a source of carbohydrate, supplemented by fish protein. For more refined ecological analysis the region also offers the distinction between tropical forest and open savannah as well as gradations in form of forest and in elevation of land. Throughout the region a common economic base supports a variety of social and cultural systems with the exception of states or protostates. For the student of social structure the great attraction of the region is its variety of "smaller" structures. Relative simplicity of social structure cannot be explained away simply as a tropical forest adaptation. The West African states and the example of lowland Maya indicate that a tropical forest environment can support complex social and cultural systems. Even more pointedly, the archeology of the mouth of the Amazon suggests some "high" culture phase in the region even if only relatively short-lived (Meggers and Evans, 1957). The Amazon Basin may, indeed, have supported far greater populations in favored areas than is indicated by present Indian populations. Orellana, the first to descend the Amazon from the headwaters of the Napo River in Peru, was impressed by the unbroken line of houses along the river. He noted villages of 500 houses and unbroken lines of dwellings up to five leagues (15 miles) long.[1]

[1] Friar Carvajal, who accompanied Orellana, reported: ". . . the territory occupied by the subjects of this great overlord named Machiparo, which in the opinion of all extended for more than eighty leagues . . . there was not from village to village (in most cases) a crossbow shot and the one which was farthest (removed from the next) was not half a league away, and there was one settlement that stretched for five leagues without there intervening any space from house to house" (Medina, 1934, p. 198).

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Thus, if we are to answer the evolutionary question of how complex social systems develop we shall have to turn to a more thorough study of social structures. In this respect, the Cubeo, who inhabit the northwest corner of the Amazon Basin, offer an example of a social structure with "advanced" features of integration and hierarchy that have, however, never quite taken hold.

Tropical forest life is not so much sylvan as it is riverine. The rivers facilitate the ceaseless flow of peoples, of splinters of communities, and of tribes along an intricate water network that binds together a virtual subcontinent. Thus, in the Amazon Basin one finds cultural traits and languages far from their ancestral sources. Not only are tropical forest cultures composite, but occasionally the tribes themselves are made up of ethnically and linguistically distinct segments. Along the river routes there are few barriers. Tribes that have adapted themselves to one corner of the basin have little difficulty in adjusting to a new location a thousand miles or more away, for even where ecologies differ the changes are neither abrupt nor drastic. Forest peoples moving on to the plains along the Orinoco Basin, for example, still have the familiar river and sylvan pattern along the river edges. Climate, vegetation, and fauna are everywhere about the same. The ease of movement and the similarity of environment account for the deposition of a common groundwork upon which all Amazon cultures are built.

One of the features of the common groundwork that defines the tropical forest as a major culture area includes slash-burn horticulture with bitter manioc as the principal but by no means the only crop. Bitter manioc offers a high yield per acre but it exhausts the soil after three to five years and demands, therefore, some kind of community circulation in which people move on, or recirculate within, a fixed zone, until new forest growth has replenished the soil. Bitter manioc, a perennial, grows readily in the Amazon Basin, but it demands a complex and time-consuming procedure for removing its poisonous prussic acid content. Manioc cultivation is almost everywhere women's work. Thus it sets a common pattern of sexual division of labor as well as a basic technology. Along the margins of the Andes, maize supplants or supplements manioc as the food crop and sets its own patterns. Maize, for example, may be regarded as a masculine crop, in which case its cultivation is more readily ritualized. But whether maize or manioc is the staple of plant diet, the tropical forest tribes, with the exception of many Ge-speaking peoples, are given over to chicha, a beer of manioc, maize, or other carbohydrate plants. Almost

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121 everywhere narcotics and excitants, stimulants and vision-producing drugs are valued for their ritual effects.

No common psychological pattern, to be sure, encompasses the area. Yet the Cubeo ritual pattern, with its exaltation of intoxication and of frenzied emotional experience, is far from uncommon in the tropical forest. In religion the Amazon Basin is a region of the shaman and of minor cults rather than of priests and of the worship of important deities. Tropical forest religion is small in scale, a feature that is parallel to and assuredly related to the decentralization of social life.

Compared with the Andes, tropical forest communities by and large are small. In many regions community size is unduly small because of severe population decline since white contact. In the Northwest Amazon, the subarea of the Cubeo, the multifamily single house is the common residence. The sense of family and of kinship are very strong, making of religion and ritual largely domestic affairs, with cults of the dead and initiation rites of outstanding importance. Considering the importance of crops, horticultural ritual is strikingly undeveloped. Here we can point to a fruitful field for the study of the commonly accepted functionalist doctrine that magic and religious ritual tend to surround areas of uncertainty such as farming. [24] In the case of the Cubeo one can state with confidence that the lack [796] of rite in farming is related to the strongly secular position of the women as horticulturists and not to the lack of hazard in farming. [462] Manioc cultivation is no less uncertain than yam cultivation in the Trobriand Islands. Uncertainty, after all, is not necessarily an objective condition. Existence is uncertain for all peoples and each society has the choice of underscoring those areas of life where it believes the fears and uncertainties to lie. Since the tropical forest is one of the major world areas of the *couvade*, the rites by which the father plays a part in parturition, it might seem as though it were the fate of the newborn infant more than the fate of the crops that is at the heart of their concern.

There is the fundamental question of the relation of the tropical forest to the "high" cultures of South and of Central America. On this there is still not much to say. Yet the problem of relationship cannot be ignored. One cannot divide lowland and highland into totally distinct and unrelated worlds. The archeology of the lower Amazon calls attention to cultural developments either related to or parallel to the marginal areas of the Andes. Highland and lowland share many traits such as maize, chicha, coca, textiles, and complex basketry. The jaguar "cult" of the Northwest Amazon may well be

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part of the Central American and Andean jaguar distribution; perhaps the Cubeo ranked clans and ancestral cult are also part of the Andean picture. However, where there is a cultural relationship it is probable that it moves in either direction. The lowlands took from the Andes; it is likely that they gave as well. Perhaps a close study of social conditions in the tropical forest could shed specific light on the spectacular historical developments in the Andes. The way in which the Cubeo maloca, the multifamily residence, tends to become a sib ceremonial center for those sib members who have broken away from it illustrates, for example, a possible process of ceremonial center formation.

Questions of culture history are inevitably to the fore when one compares the tropical forest with the Andes. But even as a separate entity the tropical forest area commands culture-historical interest. Cubeo social structure, for example, suggests some of the ways in which small social units such as extended and joint families and lineages grow into and combine to form more complex and more highly integrated social systems. Segments of one tribe attach themselves as entities to other tribes adopting a new language. Federations of segments are formed by various combinations of adoption, adhesion, and fission; these bind themselves together by ceremonial ties and not by ordinary political means of suprachieftainship. Other processes are at work elsewhere in the region. Thus it is not difficult to imagine that detailed comparative studies of tropical forest social structures could provide a rich foundation for the reconstruction of modes of social evolution, within a fixed range of social integration. As native Africa is a natural laboratory for the study of nascent states, the South American tropical forest as a major culture area is a natural laboratory for the study of variations in a small community, and lineage and clan organization.

In the foregoing discussion my intent was to provide the reader with a broad problem setting in which the Cubeo are viewed generally as a tropical forest culture. Since tropical forest anthropology is not too widely known this seemed a useful thing to do. However, the Cubeo are more specifically a part of the Northwest Amazon subculture area. The Northwest Amazon is designated as a subarea of the tropical forest in the *Handbook of South American Indians*. Not a sharply delineated area, it includes several of the major languages of lowland South America: Arawakan, Cariban, Tucanoan, Witotoan, and Macú. Of these language groups, Tucanoan (the language of the Cubeo), Witotoan, and Macú are restricted to the Northwest Amazon and were until recently listed as unclassified languages

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121 197 (Beuchat and Rivet, 1911; Mason, 1950). A new classification now places Macú with Tucanoan in a Macro-Tucanoan subfamily, and both, together with Arawakan, in a larger Andean-Equatorial family. In this new classification Witotoan is, together with Cariban, part of a Macro-Cariban subfamily under a larger Ge-Pano-Cariban family (Greenberg, 1960). Culturally, the Tucanoans fall into two groups, an eastern one to which the Cubeo belong and a western one about which we know relatively little. Information on the Arawakan and Cariban tribes in the area is somewhat fuller, but still lacking in necessary detail on social structure and cultural patterns. The Witotoans are somewhat better known through the work of Whiffen and of Preuss, while the Tucuna, who speak an isolated tongue, have been professionally described by Nimuendajú. The present volume on the 121 Cubeo attempts a more comprehensive account of the social life and social structure of a Northwest Amazon tribe. Thus the characterization of the area based upon criteria other than those of material culture rests mainly upon our knowledge of the Witotoans, the Tucuna, and the writer's field work among the Cubeo. The presence of well-developed patrilineal sibs among the Cubeo, Witotoans, and Tucuna, elaborate initiation rites, secret rites involving sacred trumpets, the use of bark-cloth masks in mourning ceremonies, and the single large house constituting the community are some of the traits that set this area apart. All of these traits, it should be said, occur outside the area as well but not in quite the same combination.

By cultural criteria the Achagua also belong in the Northwest Amazon area. This large group of Arawakan-speaking peoples, occupying an extensive area on the Colombian-Venezuelan border along the Meta, Vichada, Guaviare, and Orinoco rivers, bears some striking resemblances to the Cubeo (Steward and Faron, 1959, p. 356 ff.). These Arawakans share such traits as the exogamic patrilineal sibs, the communal dwellings, and the secret male cult of the Tucanoans. Economy and material culture are also similar, although in the tropical forest such similarities are of no great significance since they seem almost to blanket the region. Even so, on the score of subsistence the Achagua have the distinctive maize and bean complex of the highlands while the Tucanoans and their Arawakan neighbors have maize but not beans. Since patrilineal sibs are not common in the tropical forest, the Northwest area stands out strikingly in this respect. Prior to 1940 patrilineal sibs had been identified among the [614] Witotoans only (Whiffen, 1915). The writer reported them for the Cubeo of the Cuduiarí on the basis of his field work (Goldman, 1948). Nimuendajú, in a report published in 1950, independently

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Nimuendajú, in a report published in 1950, independently identified the social organizations of the Vaupés River as patrilineal sibs, and more recently a young Colombian anthropologist, Marcos Fulop (1954), described a patrilineal sib organization with a phratric grouping among the Tucano Indians. Work on the patrilineal Yagua and the Tucuna was also done after 1940. Before 1940 Kirchoff (1931), using the then best available information, had incorrectly characterized the Northwest Amazon region as based upon bilateral kin-groups that favored patrilocal residence.

If we are to conceive of the Northwest Amazon as a geographic region then the Macú must also be included. Macú is a catchall name for very simple nonhorticultural peoples whose center seems to be the Rio Negro but who have been moving westward into the Vaupés-Caquetá area (Métraux, 1948). There they have either been assimilated in the Tucanoan- and Arawakan-speaking tribes or have lived among these more powerful tribes as servants or "slaves" or in some other symbiotic relationship. The *Bahúkiwa* sibs of the Cubeo acknowledged Macú ancestry and may well have been, as Koch-Grünberg has claimed, one of the assimilated Macú groups. The Macú are shorter in stature than the other Indians in the region. They lack fixed residences, the hammock, and the canoe. If the Macú languages are truly, as Greenberg (1960) has suggested, Macro-Tucanoan, they are not an altogether alien group among their more culturally advanced neighbors. The Macú, however, have not been studied at all so that we do not know whether they are to be considered a remnant of very early nonhorticulturists or as uprooted people who had given up farming. The tropical forest has a number of examples of the latter case. *Bahúkiwa* traditions, on the other hand, refer to a prehorticultural period.

Since our knowledge of the tribes of the entire Northwest Amazon drainage, including the basin of the Rio Negro, is so slight, too much importance cannot be attached to "Northwest Amazon" as a subculture type. However, the entire Northwest Amazon region, which includes an area somewhat greater than the cultural area designated in the *Handbook of South American Indians* (Steward, 1948), has unusual potential interest, potential in the sense that the ethnological problems it poses can become real only after further field work has clarified the state of cultural patterns and cultural institutions there. This northwest quadrant of the Amazon Basin is open to the entire lower Amazon and has, at the same time, contact with the eastern margins of Andean cultures as well as with the southern margins of the Circum-Caribbean cultures. That is to say, on its northern and western flanks it is subject to influences from more highly developed

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societies. In reconstructing tropical forest culture history, note must be taken of the extraordinary ease of cultural transfers over the entire area. For this reason alone knowledge of total cultural systems seems essential. As matters stand now, much reconstruction must be based upon the very unreliable foundation of trait comparisons. What has been of special interest in my study of the Cubeo has been the way in which some widespread cultural traits, particularly masked dances, harvest rites, and sacred trumpets, have been taken up and fitted into distinctive cultural patterns with a focus in an ancestral cult.

[177]

• 133

The Northwest Amazon region is bounded on the south by the Amazon, from where it is joined by the Rio Negro eastward to where the Marañón issues from the Andes. The Guaviare River is its northern boundary, the Andean cordillera bounds it in the west, and the Rio Negro in the east. The principal rivers of the region are the Caquetá, Apaporis, Tiquié, Papurý, Isana, Vaupés (known in Brazil as the Caiarý), Cuduiarí, Querarí, Aiarí, Tie, and Guainía. All drain into the Amazon. Ecologically, the Northwest Amazon is sharply differentiated only from the neighboring Andean region to the west and to a lesser degree from the open prairie or llanos on its northern side. Eastward it fades into the flatter and lower-lying forests of the Amazon. Its southern margin is fixed only by an arbitrary river boundary. It is a densely wooded region of tall trees closely packed and interlaced with vines and lianas. At the river edges the forest growth is lower and more brushlike. It is also an elevated region whose streams are punctuated by hazardous cataracts. On the Vaupés, between Yurupari and the Rio Negro, Dr. Hamilton Rice (1910) counted 30 major cataracts and 60 small ones. The cataracts (*cachoeiras*) are for the Indians focal points of residence. Traditional sites, they often mark tribal and sib boundaries. Every cataract has its petroglyphs that depict mythical figures still known to the Indians. In some areas, as I have observed, the residents of the *cachoeiras* freshen the petroglyphs from time to time with deepening incisions. The rapids are more of a navigational hazard to the European traveler than to the Indians, who are expert canoemen and whose light craft is easily portaged. Dr. Rice, who knew a good deal about the Amazon, declared the Cubeo to be the most expert canoemen on the river. I can also testify to their coolness and skill in navigating their small dugout canoes, that have only an inch or two of freeboard, through the twisting boulder-strewn channel of a thundering rapids.

[137]

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[501]

The land slopes abruptly eastward. In its western part the area is often a tumble of ravine-cut hills, exposed rock, and swamp. The Vaupés flows past high, open, uninhabited mesas. Scattered hills of

[text continues on p. 10]

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that such an identification gives one. Had I chosen to move from one sib to another I would have had a better account of the formal principles of social structure but at the expense of a knowledge of the patterns of cultural life. My choice of the *Bahúkiwa* among all the Cubeo sibs was partly, as I have explained, fortuitous, but the site, halfway up the Cuduiari, had its advantages in giving me some command of events along the entire river.

The reader, however, will understand that this study has a special perspective. Although I have made some effort to present "Cubeo," the point of view is unavoidably that of the *Bahúkiwa*, a low ranking sib and perhaps even an alien sib of probable Macú ancestry. Strictly speaking, a Cubeo perspective can be only an artificial composite pieced together and generalized from the distinctive perspectives of each of its principal sibs. I would imagine that the Cubeo presented from the point of view of the *Hehénewa*, a high-ranking sib, would bring out somewhat more emphasis upon social status and upon the authority of the headman. One wonders how the Cubeo would appear if studied from the point of view of those of its sibs now along the Querari that were once Arawakan-speaking, or if studied from the point of view of those Cubeo-speaking sibs that now form one of the phratries of the Tucano tribe.

The theoretical position of a study is best understood from what the writer does with the material. What he claims to be doing with it is far less important. My own theoretical viewpoint will emerge from the text and more explicitly from the final summation or conclusion. At this point it should be sufficient to say that my purpose is to present the Cubeo in terms of fundamental principles of social structure and in terms of basic cultural patterns. I have chosen a level of description and of analysis that lies between the idiosyncratic and the universal. The detailed account of person and of personal reaction is an example of the idiosyncratic, and the analysis of a culture as an apparatus for the satisfaction of "basic human needs" is an example of the universal. The idiosyncratic and the universal approaches are pancultural. One deals with individual responses that can occur in any society, the other deals with cultural functions that are true of all societies. The level of description chosen here is intended to set the Cubeo apart as a particular social and cultural type and yet to allow bases for cross-cultural comparison with other societies on its cultural level.

Finally, it is necessary to say that this study is incomplete. It had been my hope to do a restudy. When this hope did not seem realizable it was obviously better to submit an incomplete report on the Cubeo than not to submit one at all.

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614 formed by fission or are aliens who have been adopted by a "parent" sib.

[613] A sib is formed of patrilineal lineages that go back no more than three or four generations. Since a sib itself is small, a lineage is of minor importance. The most significant component units of a sib 614 are the fraternal joint families and the nuclear households. A group 592 of brothers of the same father are held together by very firm ties of common upbringing and regard themselves as very close to one another. The households of this fraternal group are distinguishable, not jurally but *de facto*, as separate entities within the sib. When a sib splits, it is the fraternal group that offers the most ready line of 614 cleavage. Finally, there is the nuclear household, a most important 594 unit that occupies its own "compartment" in the maloca, maintains its own hearth, and is capable also of asserting its autonomy. A nuclear household may break from the common residence group of the maloca and establish itself as an Independent, but that is about as far from the sib as it can go. It is not a truly self-sustaining unit. When it does break away, the separation is a consequence of serious disaffection, from the Cubeo point of view, an example of social pathology. Detached nuclear households often become vagrants, imposing upon the hospitality of related sibs.

● 121 What I have presented is an outline of Cubeo social organization 61 that encompasses a descending order of subordinate and component 621 segments, from tribe to nuclear household. There is another social concept that falls somewhat outside of this structure. That is the concept of community. The community is the common residence group, based, to be sure, upon the sib, but not exclusively so. Common residence creates its own norms of behavior.

THE COMMUNITY

621 The concept of community offers perhaps the most advantageous 182 entry into the character of Cubeo social structure; it exemplifies almost all social relationships and relates them to the physical factors of location, economy, and material culture.

361 From the air, a community appears as a small semicircular island pressed against a thread of river in an otherwise unbroken expanse of tropical forest. The air view emphasizes the isolation and self-containment of each community. Along a well-populated river such as the [615] Cuduiari the communities resemble rough-shaped beads widely spaced along the thin strand of the sinuously curving river. The river literally binds the communities since, in the main, communities

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A few communities rear ducks in the same manner, and some Indians have experimented valiantly with rearing pigs as pets.

The trade element in Cubeo experimentation with plants and animals is important but not, to repeat, the exclusive interest. I had been living among the *Bahúkwa* a short time when they learned of my liking for fruit. I was constantly presented with fruit, some wild and some cultivated. I usually made some payment in the form of a small gift. Word spread along the Cuduiarí. One morning I saw a fleet of a dozen canoes or so, each heaped high with bananas, plantains, pineapple, lemons, and oranges, coming to the community. It was all for me, brought in the expectation that I would reciprocate with a gift. This transaction, however, was an unusual one, for normally the Indians have no market for any food product but dry manioc – farinha. They have no great taste for fruit and grow more than they normally consume for the sheer satisfaction of growing it. Lemons, for example, are used by women to prepare a hair wash.

MANUFACTURES

Cubeo material culture is rather elaborate for a tropical forest tribe, but not as fully developed as is that of the more westerly tribes that have a cotton technology. Material culture has been treated by Koch-Grünberg and is, moreover, fully covered in the *Handbook of South American Indians*. I shall confine myself then to a discussion of manufactures as it bears upon an understanding of Cubeo social life.

There are few products made jointly by men and women. Men ordinarily make all objects that are of wood or fiber, while women specialize in ceramics. Thus, the great bulk of material equipment has been made by men. This includes the house, all baskets and trays, hammocks, canoes, signal drums, ceremonial objects, musical instruments, weapons, and fishing gear. Women make pottery, including the large ceramic plate of the manioc oven and the hourglass-shaped pottery hearthstones. They also prepare gourds as dishes and water containers since these supplement pottery dishes. There is a small basket (*pôbü*) in which personal articles are kept, and this is made by young girls as well as by men. The only product that is jointly made is the *pediba*, the manioc grating board. Men make the board, execute a design on it, and women insert the bits of stone that form the grating surface. Whatever is made is either as a specific gift or to replace an object or utensil that is no longer serviceable. Men work slowly and for short intervals, so that the completion of a

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Development of the Individual

The development of individual character is always relevant to an understanding of social organization. In the case of Cubeo social organization, founded, as it is, upon the lifelong continuity of the sibling group of males, the psychological factors are of particular importance. The following discussion will attempt to show the relationship between some of the experiences of a Cubeo from infancy to adulthood and some of the formal principles of Cubeo social organization. By and large, Cubeo social organization must conform to the direct psychological dispositions of its members for the commanding reason that the people have a low tolerance for psychic discomfort. The sib, as we have noted, is readily split; this means, in psychological terms, that those who find any cause for dissatisfaction with life within the community are quick to leave. The community, therefore, is constantly being drained of its malcontents. Those who remain are, in a manner of speaking, in harmony with one another. This harmony, it should be said at once, is not that of homogeneity. It is based rather upon individual complementarities, of extraversion-introversion, active-passive, and leader-follower, as in any community. The harmony is between the requirements of adult life and the experiences of childhood.

The Cubeo use the following age-grade terms. The nursing infant from birth until it learns to crawl is called *abohoidjò* (male) or *abohokó* (female); a crawling infant is *tcumí* (male or female, although *tcúmiko* is possible for the female); the walking child who

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Conclusion: Principles and Patterns

Cubeo is a representative of that group of horticultural societies whose economics serve subsistence needs in the main. Such societies, commonly described as "simple," lack formal structures of social status and of power. Their social structures are built around relatively small segments, and they have religious doctrines and patterns of ceremonial organization that correspond to the primitiveness of social and economic relations. 121

Such a description does no more, however, than set a most general frame for the discussion of the type. We now know that the term "simple society" does little justice to the variety and intricacy of social relationships and of patterns of thought that even so materially impoverished a society as the Arunta of Australia possesses. Closer to our area, we are aware of the diversity and intricacy of social relationships among such "marginal" cultures as represented by the Ge-speaking Indians of central Brazil. The more closely a people are studied the more evident does it become that even for very broad descriptive purposes the old rubrics – simple or complex, seminomadic, egalitarian, segmentary, subsistence economy, to mention but a few of the more common – are inadequate to identify the true state of affairs. We need to locate in greater analytic depth the social and cultural principles upon which such broadly characterized societies are founded.

The emphasis in anthropology has, indeed, shifted from the descriptive to the analytical account of a society. In the analytical ac-

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count the concern is with the structure of relationships, that is, with the more fundamental principles and patterns of social behavior. In deriving such principles and patterns we are now ready to go beyond those elementary and very general theoretical doctrines according to which culture is an apparatus for satisfying basic human needs. By now this doctrine impresses us as both obvious and tautological. Cultural anthropology seeks a characterization of distinctive cultural types rather than a generalized characterization of Culture or Society. In its recognition of the distinctiveness of cultures, cultural anthropology is close to history in method and aim. In its search for general principles it is close to sociology. The proper route of cultural anthropology, therefore, lies somewhere between the poles of generality and of uniqueness. Thus, in the summation of principles and of patterns that I am about to present, my aim is to find a level of analytic abstraction that is specific enough to characterize and to identify the Cubeo and yet has enough generality to provide a basis for identifying the broader sociocultural type to which the Cubeo may belong. The justification for a level that is between the generalizing and the particularizing is that it offers promise of greater analytic refinement than a level at either pole. The problem is to move as closely as possible to the ultimate uniqueness of a cultural configuration without losing the capability for comparative study. After all, one can profitably move up the scale from the particular to the general, but there is no good way of moving down. The aim of the present analysis, therefore, is to depict what is specifically Cubeo and yet allow bases for two successively broader typological characterizations, namely, tropical forest economies of South America and "simple" horticultural economies in general.

LINKAGE AND AUTONOMY

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With respect to social structure, the most fundamental Cubeo principle involves a relationship between the apparent opposites of linkage and of autonomy. That is to say, the Cubeo will find a way to assert their independence of each group of which they are a part. The clearest example of this principle is the relationship between phratry and sib. What this relationship brings out is not an antagonism between opposing principles of collectivism and of individualism but rather a complementarity. The phratry does not impede the autonomy of the sib. On the contrary, it fosters this autonomy. It does so by fostering a strong sense of sib identity; for the consciousness of sib identity is actually heightened by the enforced relationship of

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The relationship between the patterns of calm-frenzy and linkage-autonomy appears also in the juridical area. Here, as we observed, justice is carried out not in an atmosphere of calm deliberation but in an atmosphere of high excitement, as befits a situation in which the collectivity of the sib has been broken both by commission of the crime and by the act of expelling the offender. The juridical is not a ritual area. The example, however, demonstrates the continuity of ritual polarity-complementarity with a more general patterning of mood.

PATTERNING OF MOOD

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The point has been made repeatedly that the Cubeo will undertake no significant action unless the mood is appropriate. The previous example of the juridical process is illustrative. Punishment or vengeance must correspond with appropriate anger. Ritual acts and dances are omitted when the mood is wrong. All collective enterprises of the sib, such as hunting, fishing, foraging, and housebuilding, require a mood of geniality. When such a mood begins to break, a fairly rapid chain reaction ensues. The sense of collectivity weakens and this, in turn, darkens the mood. This cycle of mood periodicity has been discussed in the context of the drinking party. In a different context it applies to other major collective efforts such as housebuilding, which also follows a cyclical rhythm of spurts of work alternating with lulls. The fishing cycle is still another example of Cubeo dependence on mood.

OVER-ALL PATTERN

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Some examples of linkage of smaller patterns have been presented to suggest at least the possibility of describing Cubeo society in some broader and more inclusive terms. The problem, however, is that the concept of pattern is a hypothetical construction based upon calling of attention to analogies or parallelisms. The method of pattern construction is largely intuitive and the demonstration of its validity is largely a matter of presenting a credible argument. Despite these self-evident scientific shortcomings there can be little doubt that the presentation or analysis of a culture without the concept of pattern must involve a serious distortion of reality. The aim of a theoretical construction that would present a culture in terms of over-all pattern is to provide appropriate bases for a more sophisticated culture typology than anthropology presently possesses. Pattern need

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•121 571 not be accepted only as a statement of uniqueness, although the scientific value of a unique configuration is undeniable. Each general cultural pattern may ultimately be unique, but since uniqueness is a relative concept the possibility of some more general typology is a real one. Thus the hypothetical statement of a Cubeo over-all pattern should have more than specific applicability.

571 593 What kind of model, then, does Cubeo culture follow? Socially the root model is that of the solidarity of brothers. It is around this root concept that the characteristic principles of Cubeo kinship and sib and phratric organization develop. The solidarity-of-brothers concept is, as we have seen, both set off from and bound to all other relations by the universal human doctrine of order: polarity-complementarity. Since primogeniture, though recognized, is minor, the male sibling solidarity is in effect nonhierarchical; it is basically lateral. And it is this fraternal model, we might say, that gives the strong egalitarian cast to Cubeo society. The ancestral cult, in all its aspects, is the particular Cubeo phrasing of the sacred character of male sibling solidarity. It is not a worship of the past, nor does it single out for special distinction any particular ancestral line except from the standpoint of the phratry. But the phratry, having mainly a ritual rather than a corporate character, has only a limited effect upon the patterning of Cubeo life. The ancestral tradition does differentiate the sibs. The ancestral cult, on the other hand, serves rather to promote the lateral solidarity of the male siblings who are the roots of the sib.

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571 593 61 The significance of the social pattern based upon the solidarity of the male siblings has been noted by Radcliffe-Brown as characteristic of primitive societies organized in patrilineal lineages. It is indeed a fundamental and elementary social pattern subject to a wide range of variations. In the case of the Cubeo, their entire elaboration of kinship, lineage, sib, and phratry follows very closely the lines of the elementary pattern. If the close approximation of a social structure to an elementary basic pattern may be taken as a mark of simplicity, then on this score Cubeo social structure may be characterized as "simple." It is understood, of course, that male sibling solidarity is only the focal point of a larger social pattern that includes the polarity-complementarity relationships of affinity-consanguinity, and the male-female as well as the near-distant relationship.

571 152 181 If Cubeo social structure can be derived from an elementary model, so can its emotional structure, or ethos. The Cubeo ethos seems to be based upon the doctrine of harmonizing each particular mode of emotional expression with an appropriate social activity. Stated

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152 model, that underlies an important aspect of the Cubeo ethos.
796 What is surprising about finding coitus as a model for ritual ethos is
181 not that this obvious pattern has been drawn upon, but that it is not
831 drawn upon more often. Among the Carajá of central Brazil, I am
[171] informed, the coital ritual pattern is explicitly recognized, each phase of the dance being named from a phase of sexual intercourse.[2] It is quite possible that I simply failed to discover the same explicit relationship among the Cubeo. The explicitness that I did discover, though, is in their assertion that ritual excitement, whether produced by drugs, alcohol, or the ritualization of sex, is a necessary complement to the ritual magic of the below-the-knee ligature of long life. This identification of emotional intensity with life itself is also an obvious and therefore a simple relationship. In sum, we can say that the main features of Cubeo ethos draw upon very obvious and simple biopsychological models and – this is the significant point – adhere rather closely, almost literally, to them. Since the social pattern also draws upon a very elementary model we must conclude that the sociocultural pattern as a whole is built upon the simplest of social and biopsychological models. Needless to say, even the bare and incomplete account of Cubeo life that has been presented suggests that the elements of over-all pattern described here do not encompass the "totality" of the culture. In all probability, however, no concept of pattern can ever encompass a total social and cultural system. From the point of view of culture theory the question is a different one. The proper question is: Does the theory of pattern provide an adequate approach to an understanding of the culture?

121 We can attempt to answer this question by applying the concept
571 of pattern that has been presented to an analysis of two fundamental cultural problems: the problem of social homeostasis and the problem of ecological adaptation. Strictly speaking, equilibrium and adaptation are one problem. It is simply that this problem can be approached from two sides.

SOCIAL HOMEOSTASIS

The assumption of social homeostasis is that a cultural system consists of relationships and interactions that are so patterned that their net effect is to perpetuate the system, generation after generation. It is understood, of course, that homeostasis, or equilibrium, is a relative condition only, since no society today is a precise duplicate of

[2] Personal communication from Dr. William Lipkind.

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what it was yesterday. Moreover, the concept of homeostasis, like that of pattern, is a theory of society. As a theory it rests upon further theoretical assumptions as to what are the significant relationships, what are the normal patterns, and what are the disharmonious and stressful interactions. In the final analysis, a theory of homeostasis deals primarily with the ways in which a society handles conflicts and stresses. From a broad perspective, one can say that Cubeo society depends rather heavily upon what might be called "mood management" for equilibrium. Its homeostasis rests a good deal less upon networks of reciprocal obligations and upon formal exchanges of goods than, let us say, in Melanesian societies. The clearest illustration of this Cubeo equilibrium principle is in the role of the headman. In Cubeo culture he is not an economic redistributor (the drinking parties cannot be regarded as an economic exchange) but a regulator of community sentiment and of good feeling. However, the nature of Cubeo equilibrium is best considered at each particular level of social integration.

Cubeo society may be presented diagrammatically as encompassing five orbits of relationship, arranged in order of progressively weaker bonds of unity. The innermost orbit is represented by the male siblings, the nucleus of the sib; the second orbit is the sib itself; the third orbit is the phratry; the fourth, the affinal kin; and the fifth and outermost, the tribe. The brother-sister relationships and the husband-wife relationships may be regarded as within the confines of the first and second orbits.

Each orbit has its own characteristics of equilibrium. To take them in reverse order: Tribal unity is so tenuous that fragmentation into subtribal units is of little consequence. New combinations are readily formed and whatever disturbance this may cause is very temporary. Tribal continuity rests upon tradition and common language and customs, on the one hand, and upon the phratric organization, of which it is a summation, on the other. With respect to tribe, the question of equilibrium is more pertinently not what holds the tribe together, but rather what there is to disperse it. Tradition and common customs and language are little more than bonds of inertia. Once set, they hold unless some stronger force intervenes. Against what counterforces are the relatively weak bonds of tradition to contend? The answer is that there are no such counterforces arising from within the society, since tribal unity has no tasks to accomplish that could involve stresses and strains. Paradoxically, the very absence of a tribal leadership is a source of unity. By virtue of the linkage-

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571 614 593 621 and children, circulate from community to community attaching themselves temporarily to different families, since the true nuclear family is not a self-sufficient unit. The strength of individual autonomy and its psychological counterpart in the form of low tolerance for psychic discomfort is capable, apparently, of breaking the firmest social connections Cubeo culture has devised.

121 571 Whether Cubeo social equilibrium is to be evaluated as static or as dynamic will depend upon the time perspective by which it is viewed. In sociological perspective one sees autonomy counterbalancing linkage, fission offsetting fusion. Tribe has only the vaguest suggestion of a higher level of integration, while phratry is a headless configuration, largely a ritual federation subject to dissolution and to re-formation. By freezing time, the sociological perspective has the inherent bias, however, of presenting social forces as in balance. On the other hand, the sociological perspective has the merit of being empirically true to the research design. That is to say, the study of a single society at a fixed point in time and for which only vague glimmerings of history are available provides few empirical grounds for any perspective other than the sociological.

121 174 The historical perspective on the Cubeo is then largely conjectural. It is, however, a necessary perspective both for the sake of offsetting the bias of artificial timelessness and for raising questions about Cubeo culture that would have relevance for a comparative study. In historical perspective, the Cubeo phratry, with its ranked sibs, the allocation of preferred river sites to the high-ranking, and the honorific prerogatives of high sib rank, suggests possibilities for further social and political development. Though the phratric organization is largely of a ritual nature, it is conceivable that a ritual organization provides a pattern for an eventually tighter integration through political and economic means. Some of the potential political means are already visible. Relations with the Macú point to an understanding of the dominance-subordination relationship on a political and economic plane. Recurrent alarms on the river that a headman is seeking political headship over all the sibs illustrate, to be sure, an acute Cubeo sensitivity to the danger of political control, but they also demonstrate that the possibility of overlordship is not altogether unreal. If then Cubeo culture has this potential for political evolution, what has impeded it? In the light of the foregoing analysis the answer is surely not simple. Since culture is an organization of patterns, its growth cannot be understood in terms of the action of single variables such as the influence of slash-burn cultivation, dependence on bitter manioc, or the tropical rain forest environment. Each of

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these conditions is relevant to an understanding of Cubeo culture. But even taken together they do not account for the principal patterns of Cubeo culture, which have a natural history of their own. The question, however, is not whether cultural patterns have a natural history, but only whether the ecological and the technological theories are adequate accounts of the natural history of a culture.

ADAPTATION

Thus, the problem of cultural adaptation to an environment cannot be dealt with simply and one-sidedly by describing the hypothetical shaping of a culture to the environment. Adaptation is a study of interaction. Generally speaking, highly specialized environments demand highly specialized and hence relatively predictable cultural responses. The tropical forest is not an example of a highly specialized economic environment judged empirically by the diversity of cultural patterns it has sustained. Bitter manioc is clearly a cumbersome crop, its high yield and relative ease of cultivation being offset by its very heavy demands on labor, specifically on that of women. It can be argued, therefore, that this crop offers a poor economic base for social and political development. Yet the Northwest Amazon also is familiar with maize, yams, and sweet manioc, not to mention beans and squash and gourd. These crops have traditionally sustained high cultures. Can we explain in ecological terms why the Northwest Amazon tribes chose to specialize in bitter manioc rather than maize and beans, as did, for example, the lowland Maya? It would seem that here is a case of cultural choice in which preferences for quick yield, minimum care in cultivation, strong sexual division of labor, and perennial harvest rather than the problems of storage and seasonal periodicity may have been compelling factors. Since the Cubeo social system placed no great demands upon an expanding economic productivity the "easy" adaptation to nature was always feasible. The main patterns of Cubeo life do not stress the disciplines of prolonged and closely managed effort. The habitual rhythms of masculine labor are discontinuous and varied. Leadership is based on the principle of mood regulation rather than on dedication to an ideal or submission to authority. High cultures are based on strongly disciplined and collective ways of life. By contrast, the Cubeo values greater emotional spontaneity and personal autonomy. An economy, needless to say, will in the end transform cultural values as well as the personal character of the members of a culture. Before

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it can do so, however, it must be given a chance, so to speak, by the culture. There is nothing in physical nature that dictates the form of an economy beyond the requirement that it satisfy subsistence needs. In the case of the Cubeo the simplicity of the economy, and the corresponding simplicity of the culture as a whole, would seem to be far more a product of its fundamental patterns and principles of organization than of an external nature. If this conclusion is correct, it would suggest that the simple horticultural societies, as a type, are not mere victims of inhospitable environments but rather that they constitute a range of cultural systems with characteristic modes of equilibrium and adaptation that do not readily foster economic expansion and higher levels of social and political integration. This statement leads to one other conclusion, namely, that a culture is only partly a functional system adapted to the satisfaction of basic needs. With respect to these satisfactions, most societies have surplus capacity, a great deal of room for maneuver and for improvisation. Much of the form of a culture represents a style of life that need not, indeed cannot, be explained simply in terms of function, equilibrium, or adaptation. A style of life then must be studied in its own terms since it too is part of the diversity of nature.

6: Moser and Tayler E.N-5 (1960-1961) 1967 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

Epilogue

1. COLOMBIAN KALEIDOSCOPE

It was July before we left the Motilon. Nearly ten months had passed since we first set out. We had visited four Indian tribes, each for a few weeks, and had had a glimpse at a fifth. Now it seemed time to take stock, not only of what was left to do, but of what had already been done. What in fact had been done? All our experiences seemed fragmentary, superficial. We had a veritable kaleidoscope of memories of Indians – impressions, no more.

Perhaps it would have been better to have lived with one tribe during those ten months and learnt more about them. But then we would have defeated our purpose which was to record the music of several tribes. Had we lingered with one group we should never have completed the whole. This was always our dilemma. But what could we have gained by staying longer? None of us, with the exception of Nestor, was academically qualified to study an Indian tribe, and to our misfortune he could come on only two of our journeys. What were we then? Perhaps we could have called ourselves adventurers or explorers, but these names are anachronisms in the twentieth century. Perhaps we were just travellers, human beings trying to catch a glimpse of another kind of man, the South American Indian, that strange perceptive being who is fast disappearing off the face of the earth.

What surprised us most was the diversity of these Indians. One tends to think all Indians alike, living in primeval forest, wearing barkcloth and covered in paint. But every Indian we met was very much an individual personality. Some were gay, others sad, some shy, others aggressive, tall, short and fat, fine-looking and ugly; taken as a whole one might describe them as introspective, reserved and very independent.

Like the individual, the tribes also were diverse, each one to a greater or lesser extent influenced by its environment – Noanamá, Tukano, Kogi and Motilon, and also Guajiro, though of these last our impressions were as fleeting as our days among them were few.

The four tribes could be more simply classified by grouping the Noanamá and Tukano together. They were living under fairly similar conditions, those of the tropical forest. Their fishing and hunting existence was in many respects alike, as was much of their material culture. Moreover, in the social sense, both tribes showed an absence of any central authority or chieftain;